

Overnight success for sweets industry newcomer

The Polish family-run company Doti serves the international specialised trade with candied and dried fruits in chocolate as well as chocolate-covered roasted nuts and almonds

Thanks to political friction within Poland's Sejm (lower house of parliament), confectionery manufacturer Doti located in Smolec, not far from Breslau, has been abruptly thrust into the spotlight. One of the Sejm delegates who spoke out on the strained state of affairs on television happened to be holding a paper bag featuring the yellow design of the Doti company. He had purchased this bag of Doti candy from the Sejm cafeteria.

Extremely difficult start-up phase with only 2.000 USD in seed money

From that moment on, Doti's telephones have been ringing off the hook with numerous potential customers wanting to get their own hands on the sweets.

Thus, all thanks to a Polish politician involuntarily becoming the advertising medium for Doti's delicacies, the company has become an overnight newcomer success in the sweets industry.

Yet before the company got to this point, Doti company owners, Dorota and Mar-

iusz Mroczkowski, had to negotiate an extremely difficult start-up phase. And with only 2,000 USD in seed money, this was far from an easy venture. In 1991, that sum only covered a basic coating machine and a chocolate solvent. The remaining money was invested in 500 kg of chocolate and 200 kg of hazelnuts. The first production samples by no means compared to today's products. Nor could the Mroczkowski husband-and-wife team count on any additional financial resources. The bank turned down their requests for credit.

Yet none of these difficulties managed to dissuade the couple from their dream of producing high-quality confectionery. Today's vantage point shows just how successfully the Doti family company overcame such formidable challenges. Today the firm has close to 40 employees, 40% of them disabled. Most of the employees have been with the company for years.

Dream of producing high-quality confectionery

While production initially took place in a rented hall, the company bought its own building in 1996 – and has been continuously expanding ever since in order to meet the rising demand. Company headquarters is still located in Smolec near Breslau.

Dorota Mroczkowski heads up the company while Production Director Anna Stankiewicz handles both production and technology. Sales Manager Mariusz

Mroczkowski additionally directs all marketing strategy. The Polish company has since become a flourishing enterprise with sales predominantly bullish since 2003. Doti now hand-packs 30 tonnes of chocolate products each month. The company works according to internationally-recognised quality standards, guaranteed by the introduction of the HACCP standard.

New "Chocolate Garden" export line

The Doti name and logo are used on the Polish market. The new "Chocolate Garden" product line constitutes premium confectioneries for the export market. Chocolate-covered fruits and nuts are among the confectionery manufacturer's specialities sold under the DOTI brand since 2001. Because the Mroczkowskis consider quality to be the sole determining factor when selecting their raw materials, they obtain their chocolate stock from Barry Callebaut. The nuts are imported from abroad, the fruits come from environmentally-pristine growing areas in Poland, the exact location of which remains a closely guarded secret. The fruit is harvested by hand and naturally candied according to traditional methods.

The use of transparent wrappers not only emphasises the exclusive nature of the Doti sweets, but also lends an added appetising aspect. The product line encompasses two product groups: chocolate-covered candied fruits, dried

